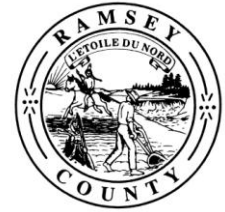


OFFICE OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY ATTORNEY

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Ramsey County Attorney John Choi
Saint Paul Police Memorial Day Service
Wednesday, May 18, 2011
12 Noon · Mears Park

Good Afternoon. It is an honor and a privilege to be here today on such a solemn occasion. We gather today, as we do every year, to honor those who have given their lives in the line of duty. We also honor the families who were left behind.

Not only in Saint Paul, but across this Nation, we observe this week as Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week to pay tribute to local, state and Federal peace officers.

Today, we will ring the bell 31 times to honor each Saint Paul Police Officer who died in the line of duty. And throughout this week, bells will be rung to honor 19,298 peace officers have died in the line of duty across this country. With every year that passes, the number of police officers who fall in the line of duty only grows larger.

Despite the dangers inherent in police work, courageous men and women continue to serve and protect our community.

The choice made by our police officers to serve and protect is something that our community must always honor because without those brave men and women, we always have the possibility that the lawless will trample on the lawful and that evil can overcome the good. It is those who are willing to serve and protect us as peace officers who provide our first line of defense and uphold community's values and laws.

One of the great joys that I have had as the former Saint Paul City Attorney and now the Ramsey County Attorney is to be able to work in partnership with so many dedicated public servants in the Saint Paul Police Department at all levels. It is not lost on me the great risk and sacrifice that police officers undertake day in and day out to keep us all safe.

But as reflect on why I feel this way, I remember the tragic events of August 26, 1994. At that time in my life, I was 24 years of age, in my second year of law school and working as an intern for a Saint Paul City Councilmember.

I remember how quickly news travelled within City Hall that Friday morning. An officer had been shot. I remember many people talking about that the officer who was shot was the son of well known and respected Saint Paul Police Officer, which only furthered the sadness in the building. Soon thereafter the manhunt for the shooter began to unfold on the TV news. Then news broke that another officer and his K9 partner were also shot.

Later that day, I would learn that Officer Ron Ryan, Jr., and Officer Tim Jones died as a result of their injuries. The mood in City Hall was grief stricken and everything came to a halt. For the next few days, I read with great sadness the stories in the newspaper about Officer Tim Jones and his K9 partner Laser and Ron Ryan, Jr.

As a 24 year old at the time who graduated from Saint Thomas Academy, I remember being moved especially about Ron Ryan, Jr. who was close to my age and who graduated from Hill Murray High School. He seemed to be just like one of my own friends from high school.

I remember thinking about my own life and how inconsequential it was in relation to the sacrifice that was made by Ron Ryan, Jr., his wife, his parents and his sister.

During that time, I felt as if our entire community just came to a standstill as we collectively mourned the loss of Tim Jones and Ron Ryan, Jr. In fact, the community response to support our fallen police officers and their families during that time and also with Jerry Vick's death in 2005 was in of itself moving.

For me personally, this was the first time in my life that I ever felt a true sense of mourning and loss and it was about two police officers I had never met. All I really knew was that officer Ron Ryan Jr. responded to a call about a man sleeping in a car to protect and serve the public and that Tim Jones responded because the man who had just killed a police officer was on the loose.

But as I reflect on why the events of August 26, 1994, were so moving to me, it was simply because both officers sacrificed their lives to serve and protect us just like all of the other fallen officers that we honor here today.

Every day the men and women of the Saint Paul Police Department make that same choice to serve and protect us, knowing that death or serious injury is always a possibility. For that, I am grateful, and I pray for the safety and well being of all of our law enforcement officers who answer the call of duty. I'm also grateful to know that I am not alone in our community in supporting the contributions of peace officers and honoring those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

May we never forget the sacrifices that have been made by our fallen officers and their families.

Thank you.

John J. Choi